

Planning Commission
Town of Ferrisburgh, Vt.

FINAL – Minutes for meeting of July 17, 2019; approved August 21, 2019.

Members present: Bob Beach (chair), Gail Blasius, Al Chamberlain, Anne Cohn, Kristin DeBellis, Mike Quinn, Bessie Sessions, Walter Reed. **Absent:** Arabella Holzapfel.

Town official present: Bonnie Barnes, zoning administrator.

Visitors present: Carl Cole, Eliza van Lennep, Janice Perry.

Bob Beach, chair, opened the meeting at 7:35 p.m.

Application 19-060 by Carl Cole for review of a sketch plan for a two-lot subdivision of a 10-acre parcel at 3173 Hawkins Road. The property is in the Rural Agricultural (RA-5) District and identified on Town of Ferrisburgh tax maps as parcel 04/0143.13.

Carl Cole said he asked Bonnie Barnes, zoning administrator, to put his application on the agenda for this meeting but was not yet ready to present his plan for the property. He said he and his wife had been thinking about downsizing from their current home on Sand Road and thought the Hawkins Road parcel would be a nice place to build a home for their retirement. He asked the board to hold off on a review of the sketch plan until a future date.

Bob Beach, Planning Commission chair, said the commission would take no action on the application until Cole was ready to present a more detailed plan.

Eliza van Lennep of the law firm Langrock Sperry & Wool was at the meeting to represent neighboring property owner Janice Perry. Van Lennep said Perry had objections to the proposed subdivision and would detail those if and when the plan was considered at a future Planning Commission meeting.

Approval of minutes: Mike Quinn made a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting on June 19, 2019, as submitted. Gail Blasius seconded. Bob Beach, Gail Blasius, Al Chamberlain, Anne Cohn, Kristin DeBellis, Mike Quinn and Bessie Sessions voted in favor. Walter Reed abstained. **Motion approved.** Board members determined they did not have a quorum present to approve minutes from the meetings on November 28, 2018, or February 20, 2019.

Other business: Walter Reed said it appeared that Mark Franceschetti, who recently received approval to construct a storage facility on the corner of Route 7 and Old Hollow Road, was not abiding by the conditions imposed by the town. The project was to include one sign, and there are now two signs, and the access road to the storage facility was not supposed to be accessible from both Old Hollow Road and Route 7. Bonnie Barnes, zoning administrator, was asked to be in touch with Franceschetti.

There was a brief discussion of other signs at businesses along the Route 7 corridor, some of which are not included in the permits issued to those businesses. Commission members said most

of the signs in question are small and seasonal in nature, and that they probably should not be considered a problem unless they block traffic or sight lines at intersections.

Gail Blasius asked whether people needed permits to establish Airbnb sites at their home. Bonnie Barnes said the town was asking people to apply for Conditional Use Permits when setting up Airbnb units. There was a brief discussion of how the town should be dealing with Airbnb and other short-term rentals. It was noted that people have been renting out lakeshore houses for many years. Bonnie Barnes said she is assuming the Airbnb rentals are covered by the current bylaws under the “tourist home” definition. Commission members said the issue should be part of the rewrite of the bylaws, now under way. Problems that can arise include behavior of renters—such as noise, traffic and parking—that disturbs the neighborhood; health issues due to insufficient septic systems; and possible liability for the town if there is a mishap at a permitted Airbnb unit. Bob Beach noted some towns, including Woodstock, are trying to avoid issues with Airbnb operations by barring such rentals unless the property owner lives in the home.

Bonnie Barnes asked if the commission would be okay with her pushing the deadline for pending sketch plan reviews (which do not need to be warned) to the Monday before the next Wednesday meeting. The current deadline is the Wednesday of the week before the next meeting, or one week in advance. Bonnie Barnes said it can be difficult for her to get the word out about sketch plan submissions using the current deadline. Commission members said she should do whatever she felt comfortable with, making sure she had time to provide adequate notice of sketch plan reviews to the public and neighboring property owners.

Walter Reed said it was great to see the recent transformation of the barn on Route 7, on the property that is being developed by Town & Country Homes. Commission members agreed that it was work that should be applauded.

Adjournment: Kristin DeBellis made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:22 p.m. Walter Reed seconded. All voted in favor. **Motion approved.**

— Respectfully submitted,

Tim Etchells